



Economic Impact Analysis Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

18 VAC 140-20 et Seq. – Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work Board of Social Work November 25, 2002

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) has analyzed the economic impact of this proposed regulation in accordance with Section 9-6.14:7.1.G of the Administrative Process Act and Executive Order Number 25 (98). Section 9-6.14:7.1.G requires that such economic impact analyses include, but need not be limited to, the projected number of businesses or other entities to whom the regulation would apply, the identity of any localities and types of businesses or other entities particularly affected, the projected number of persons and employment positions to be affected, the projected costs to affected businesses or entities to implement or comply with the regulation, and the impact on the use and value of private property. The analysis presented below represents DPB's best estimate of these economic impacts.

Summary of the Proposed Regulation

The Board of Social Work (board), pursuant to its periodic review of this chapter, is proposing two small changes to the language of the chapter. First, the board is updating a list of certified providers of courses in this subject area to account for a change in the name of one of the organizations listed. Second, the board is adding language to the chapter prohibiting a social worker from engaging in sexual relations with a client for two years following the termination of the client-counselor relationship.

Estimated Economic Impact

Updating the name of an organization in a list of certified course providers is simply a matter of housekeeping and has no economic impact. The addition of a restriction on sexual relations between social workers and their clients could conceivably have some economic impact. It is possible that such relations between counselor and client could lack the quality of voluntariness under some circumstances due to the possible undue influence of a counselor over his or her client. Such transaction could easily result in emotional trauma and significant costs to

the clients involved. It is also true, however, that this proposal may result in the prohibition of some genuinely voluntary sexual relationships that might arise from a counselor and client relationship. This prohibition would also impose costs. Staff at the Department of Health Professions indicates that no cases of inappropriate sexual conduct between social workers and their clients have been reported in recent years. Nor is there any evidence that any significant number of sexual relationships develop between social workers and their clients. Thus, it can be expected that this regulatory language will have little if any actual economic impact in the Commonwealth.

Businesses and Entities Affected

This regulation applies to approximately 4,556 licensed social workers in Virginia.

Localities Particularly Affected

This rule applies throughout the Commonwealth and is not expected to have any disproportionate effects on localities.

Projected Impact on Employment

There will be no impact on employment from this change.

Effects on the Use and Value of Private Property

It is unlikely that this regulation will have any effects whatsoever on the use and value of private property in Virginia.